

Ambassador For The Martial Arts

Carlos S. Velez II

By Shihan William Rivera

Edited by *Lydia Alicea*

We have all met or known of individuals who have described the benefits derived from martial arts training. As well, it has provided many with more than a foundation for life or a livelihood. Some have become wealthy, found fame and fortune.

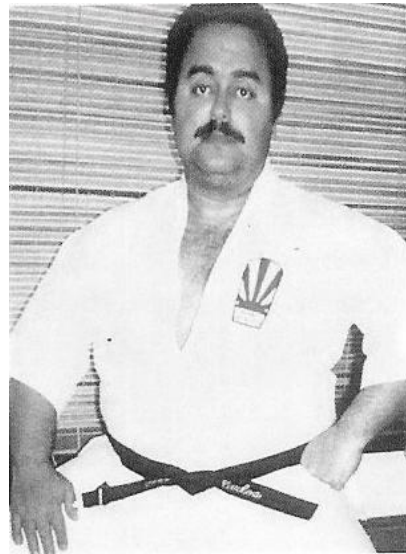
Still there are those who are in it for the pure love of the art and have devoted their lives to furthering their development. Think about this: who among the many who have been written about can you identify as one who has given back to the martial arts in ways not measured by the dollar or with the advancement of rank?

Yes, indeed there are some. One such individual is known, by many to have quietly, for the past 25 years plus, made his mark, dug his niche, and developed many relationships with grandmasters and organizations worldwide.

He has been instrumental in helping to build bridges between various organizations and martial artists, that because of one reason or another, could not connect. Carlos S. Velez II Shihan knows how important those connections can be. Realizing that if paths do not cross circumstantially why not be in a position to effect a change? Why not be the person to bring parties together? This is why many throughout the world have recognized his efforts

Many martial arts organizations and individuals seek him specifically because of his extensive base of relationships, and his knowledge from years of experience as an artist, and as a journalist.

Here is the story of Carlos S. Velez Shihan's journey:



In 1966, Carlos Velez began his studies in martial arts under Sensei Jose A. Martinez, (Sensei Roberto Rios first Kyokushinkai black belt trained in Puerto Rico). Velez continues to train with Sensei Martinez who holds rank with ATAMA (American Teacher's Association of the Martial Arts), as well as with I.S.O.K. (International Society of Okinawan Japanese Karate-Do).

In 1967, he continued to build upon this foundation by joining Sensei Roberto Rios (Kyokushinkai under Tadashi Nakamura), and Mas Oyama's (Kyokushinkai Kan) International Karate Organization.

He has also lived in Texas where he served as representative For Mas Oyama and as an instructor at the West Texas State University Kyokushin Karate Association.



Carlos Velez began his work as a journalist in 1975 writing for "K-Arte Marcial Karate", a periodical based in Puerto Rico. Aware that the martial arts had a serious following In Puerto Rico, it lacked a voice, a sounding board, for an audience waiting to have something of their own. With the opportunity presented, he responded by interviewing and writing about martial artists and covering events and demonstrations throughout. His efforts followed a path he considered important, not just as a martial artist.

In 1982, there was growing concern by many martial artists in Puerto Rico about the lack of cohesion and uniformity of regulations and poor officiating in tournament events. Carlos Velez was approached and asked to address this need. In his words, "I told them I would think about it, find out and get back to them." He did more than that. He evaluated the Amateur Athletic Union (AAU) reviewed their rules book and found it convenient for Puerto Rico. Instrumental in bringing the AAU Karate Program, he was appointed Chairman for the AAU Karate Program in Puerto Rico.

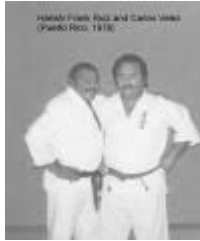


Over the course of time, Carlos Velez took full advantage in furthering his martial arts skills and knowledge when an opportunity presented itself. He has trained under, Roberto Rios, Frank Ruiz, Jose R. Conde, Fernando Caraballo and Carlos H. Montalvo, (Icons in the world of Karate) and attended various seminars.

Carlos Velez chose the path taken by most martial arts. At various points along the way there were “alternate routes” though. Sometimes the detours can be a lot more interesting! Regardless, the opportunity to “do something different” for the martial arts and to give back to the arts in other ways, was certainly his vision.

Don't knock it! In everyday life, we all give credit to those who stick their necks out a bit. We recognize their contributions. Carlos Velez Shihan is one such individual who is not afraid to ask, to learn more, and to become involved by extending his hand out to help a fellow martial artist in whatever way he can. He has and continues to serve as a voice, as a liaison/ advisor for various martial arts organizations and karate schools particularly for Kyokushin Karate.

Perhaps more appropriately, he received another extraordinary form of recognition when the Okinawan Karate Federation appointed him a "Goodwill Ambassador" in the martial arts.



Carlos S. Velez Shihan continues on his path writing for various magazines. He is working on a book, which will consist of interviews he has done with Martial Arts personalities over the years, and yes he continues being an "Ambassador for the Martial Arts"